

Remarks

The above-referenced patent application (the "Patent Application") originally had been filed on November 24, 2003 with seventeen (17) claims, four (4) of which were independent in nature. A Non-Final Office Action was mailed May 31, 2006 to which the Applicants responded in an Amendment mailed on August 31, 2006. In the Non-Final Office Action, each of claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,978,422 to Bushe et al. (Bushe) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0098294 by Dean et al. (Dean.) In response, the Applicants amended claims 1, 7, 10 and 15 to better define the claimed "resource" as "collaborative resources for consumption when completing a task in a collaborative application."

In a Final Office Action mailed December 5, 2006, the Examiner conceded that the combination of Bushe and Dean failed to teach each and every limitation of the amended claims. Namely, the Examiner conceded that neither Bushe nor Dean taught the amended claim language of "collaborative resources for consumption when completing a task in a collaborative application." However, upon further search and consideration, the Examiner combined U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0018719 to Ruths with Bushe and Dean as a new basis for the previously recited rejections.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner contended that the claimed "collaborative resources for consumption when completing a task in a collaborative application" is shown by paragraphs [0067] and [0128] of Ruths. In particular, paragraph [0067] reads as follows:

[0067] The kernel 18 bootstraps and manages the collaborative platform. The kernel 18 may manage entry and removal of collaborative data resource representations 12 into the local environment. The kernel may maintain a collaborative data resource registration to which collaborative data resources may be registered and unregistered. The kernel may notify objects in the local environment when a collaborative data resource representation is registered, unregistered or mutated. The kernel may also manage initial configuration of the collaborative platform.

Likewise, paragraph [0128] reads as follows:

[0128] Note that any form of ID may be used to indicate the participants on the mutation list. For example, the mutation list may be a list of network addresses, or universal unique identifiers, etc. The mutation list provides a mechanism to arbitrate changes in hosting a collaborative resource. When a current server representation is lost, the mutation list indicates how each remaining representation is to be mutated. The mutation list indicates which representation is to mutate into the new server representation, and the remaining representations remain clients but mutate to change their server connections to the new server representation.

Importantly, Ruths defines "collaborative resource" in the first few paragraphs of the Detailed Description as follows:

[0050] FIG. 1 is an abstract illustration of the sharing of various computer-implemented objects 12 by multiple participants 14 in a collaborative environment 10. In one embodiment, a collaborative platform is provided on each participant in the collaborative environment. The collaborative platform may be a software system which facilitates the development and deployment of collaborative content by providing high-level services which abstract away the low-level detail of networking and distributed environment synchronicity. The collaborative platform (and thus the shared collaborative environment) may be data-centric so that collaboration occurs on a collaborative resource (which represents data and/or metadata). Participant applications, which use the collaborative data, become collaborative via the collaborative platform.

(emphasis added)

Based upon the clear equivalence of "resource" with "data representations", the Applicants believe that a claim amendment highlighting the "physical and tangible" nature of manageable resources such as classrooms, instructors and servers hosting Net meetings will be sufficient to overcome the cited references.

Most recently, the Examiner agreed to a personal interview in order to discuss a resolution to the present rejections. The Applicants are most appreciative of the Examiner's willingness to conduct such interview. In the interview, Applicants presented proposed claim amendments believed to overcome the present rejections. Subsequently, the Applicants discussed these proposed claim amendments telephonically and, after reviewing an advanced copy of the proposed claim amendments, the Examiner agreed that the proposed claim amendments indeed overcome the present rejections. Accordingly, the Applicants present herewith claim amendments identical to the proposed claim amendments.

As such, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) owing to the foregoing remarks. The Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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